

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a suspension of a silicic particulate filler[[,]] in a silicone material (*SM*) comprising:

➤ ~~*SM*₁polyaddition:~~

▪ ~~at least one type *A* polyorganosiloxane POS carrying alkenyl crosslinking functional groups *Fa* capable of reacting with the crosslinking functional groups *Fb* (SiH) of at least one *B* type POS, this *A* POS being taken alone or as a mixture with at least one nonreactive (*E*) POS;~~

▪ ~~and at least one *B* type POS carrying crosslinking functional groups *Fb* (SiH) capable of reacting with the alkenyl crosslinking functional groups *Fa* of the *A* POS(s);~~

○ ~~and/or *SM*₂polycondensation:~~

▪ ~~at least one *C* type POS carrying hydroxyl crosslinking functional groups *Fc* and/or OR functional groups (*R* = C₁-C₃₀ alkyl, C₂-C₃₀ alkenyl, aryl, which are optionally substituted (preferably halogenated)) precursor of the functional groups *Fc'*, these crosslinking functional groups *Fc* being capable of reacting with crosslinking functional groups *Fc* of this *C* POS or of other *C* POSs, and with crosslinking functional groups of at least one crosslinking agent *D*, this *C* POS being taken alone or as a mixture with at least one nonreactive (*E*) POS;~~

➤ ~~and/or *SM*₃polydehydrogenocondensation:~~

~~▪ at least one C' type POS carrying hydroxyl crosslinking functional groups Fc' and/or OR' functional groups (R' = C₄-C₃₀ alkyl, C₂-C₃₀ alkenyl, aryl, which are optionally substituted (preferably halogenated)) precursor of the functional groups Fc', these crosslinking functional groups Fc' being capable of reacting with other crosslinking functional groups Fb' (SiH) of at least one B' type POS, this C' POS being taken alone or as a mixture with at least one nonreactive (E) POS;~~

~~▪ and at least one B' type POS carrying crosslinking functional groups Fb' (SiH) capable of reacting with the crosslinking functional groups Fb' OH or OR' of the C' POS(s);~~

~~➤ and/or SM₄;~~

~~▪ or at least one nonreactive (E) POS;~~

~~—— this suspension being capable of being used in particular for producing compositions which can be crosslinked by polyaddition and/or by polycondensation and/or by dehydrogenocondensation or antifoam silicone compositions;~~

~~—— this method being of the type in which an aqueous suspension of silicic particulate filler is made hydrophobic by treating with at least one halogenated reagent, this treatment comprising a transfer of the silica made hydrophobic into a nonaqueous phase and at least one step for at least partial removal of water,~~

wherein said method comprising:

a) preparing or using an aqueous silica suspension ~~is prepared or used which comprises~~ comprising: [[~]] silica, [[~]] water which is optionally acidified, and [[~]] at least one hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator,

b) optionally[[,]] incorporating part of the silicone material SM ~~is incorporated~~ into the aqueous silica suspension obtained at the end of step a);

c) producing a modified hydrophobic silica filler by grafting hydrophobic units formed by $\equiv\text{Si}-(\text{R}^c)_{1 \text{ to } 3}$ with, where $\text{R}^c =$ ~~hydrogene~~ hydrogen, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_{30}$ alkyl, $\text{C}_2\text{-C}_{30}$ alkenyl, aryl, these groups R^c being optionally substituted (~~preferably halogenated~~), are grafted onto the silica by exposing this the silica to halosilanes that are precursors of these units and by allowing the reaction to proceed, preferably while stirring the whole, optionally in the hot state; wherein the halosilane precursors are present in a nonaqueous phase and the silica comprising the grafted hydrophobic units is transferred from the aqueous phase to the nonaqueous phase.

~~d) the procedure is carried out such that the transfer of the silica grafted by hydrophobic units, from the aqueous phase to the nonaqueous phase, is carried out;~~

[[e)]] d) optionally, removing at least part of the aqueous phase and of the comprising reaction by-products is drawn off;

[[f)]] e) optionally, cooling the reaction medium is cooled if necessary;

[[g)]] f) optionally, removing the residual acidity of the nonaqueous phase is washed off by washing the non-aqueous with water;

[[h)]] g) mixing the totality or the remainder of the silicone material SM is mixed with the modified hydrophobic silica filler which is now hydrophobic;

[[i)]] h) removing the residual water is evaporated off by evaporation; and

[[j)]] i) and recovering an oil is recovered which comprises a hydrophobic particulate filler suspension of the modified hydrophobic silica filler in a crosslinkable silicone material, preferably without ever passing via a dried hydrophobic silica.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the pH of this suspension is ≤ 2 , ~~preferably ≤ 1~~ , at least during step a).

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein at least one precursor of silicone resin, ~~preferably a silicate, and still more preferably a sodium silicate,~~ is used in step a).

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising grafting wherein functional units other than hydrophobic units are grafted onto silica by exposing it the silica to halosilane precursors of these functional grafts, ~~the functions which can be given to the silica by these units being preferably those in the group consisting of the following functions: bactericidal, bacteriostatic, chromophoric, fluorescence, antifouling, and combinations thereof.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein there are chosen the silica comprises one or more precipitated silicas whose BET specific surface area is between 50 and 400 m²/g and ~~mixing conditions such that the~~ dynamic viscosity at 25°C of the suspension during mixing is less than or equal to 300 Pa.s, ~~preferably less than or equal to 150 Pa.s.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator is ~~chosen from~~ an organic solvents solvent, ~~preferably from the group consisting of alcohols, ketones, amides, alkanes and mixtures thereof.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, ~~wherein the acidification of~~ further comprising acidifying the aqueous suspension (aqueous phase) is carried out using an acid, ~~preferably an inorganic acid, and still more preferably an acid is chosen from the group consisting of HCl, H₂SO₄, H₃PO₄ and or~~ mixtures thereof of acids.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the silicone material *SM* comprises at least one oligoorganosiloxane, preferably a diorganosiloxane, and still more preferably hexamethyldisiloxane (M_2).

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the precursor of the hydrophobic units is an alkylhalosilane, preferably an alkylchlorosilane, and still more preferably a methylchlorosilane.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to Claim 1, wherein A~~
method for preparing a suspension of a precipitated silica powder is used in a
silicone material (SM) and wherein the following operations are carried out
comprising:

[[•]]a) introducing the relevant products are introduced into the stirred preparation vessel in the following order:

[[o]] the an aqueous silica suspension of a precipitated silica powder, optionally added in several fractions, the at least one hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator[[- preferably consisting of isopropyl alcohol]], and optionally an acid[[-, preferably HCl -]];

[[o]] halosilanes that are a precursor of the hydrophobic units:
-Si-(R^c)_{1 to 3} with where R^c = C₁-C₃₀ alkyl or a C₂-C₃₀ alkenyl[[- preferably (CH₃)₃SiCl-]];

[[o]] part of the comprising at least one oligoorganosiloxane[[- preferably hexamethyldisiloxane (M_2)-]];

[[•]]b) heating the medium is heated to a temperature in the region of the reflux temperature of the hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator[[- preferably that of isopropyl alcohol between 70 and 80°C]] to form a hydrophobic silica ;

[[•]]c) optionally cooling the medium ~~is optionally cooled~~;

[[•]]d) separating the aqueous phase ~~is separated~~ from the nonaqueous phase[[- preferably by decantation -]];

[[•]]e) removing the nonaqueous phase ~~is removed~~;

[[•]]f) optionally washing, at least once, this the nonaqueous phase is ~~washed~~ with an aqueous liquid and then removing the aqueous washing phase is ~~removed~~;

[[•]]g) mixing the optionally washed, nonaqueous silicone phase ~~is mixed~~ with all or the remainder of the silicone material *SM*[[, with the silica now hydrophobic, this *SM* preferably comprising at least one polyorganosiloxane POS]]; and

[[•]]h) recovering an oily suspension of hydrophobic particulate silicic filler is ~~recovered~~ in a crosslinkable silicone material *SM*.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the various ingredients are used in the following proportions (parts by dry weight for all ingredients that ~~[[is]] are~~ not water):

- silica: 100;
- acid (e.g. HCl): 20 to 60, ~~preferably from 30 to 50~~;
- precursor of $-\text{Si}-(\text{R}^c)_{1 \text{ to } 3}$ {e.g. $(\text{CH}_3)_3\text{SiCl}$ }, 5 to 500, ~~preferably from 10 to 200~~;
- H bond stabilizer/initiator (e.g. isopropanol): 0 to 20, ~~preferably from 1 to 10~~;
- *SM* oil: 40 to ~~[[2 000]] 2,000~~, ~~consisting exclusively or otherwise of~~ oligoorganosiloxane[[- preferably of M_2]];
- water: 2 to ~~[[8 000]] 8,000~~, ~~preferably 200 to 1 000~~.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the silica used is mainly in the form of a slurry of precipitated silica(s).

13. - 15. (Cancelled)

16. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the modified hydrophobic silica filler has not been present as a dried hydrophobic silica .

17. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the pH of this suspension is ≤ 1 , at least during step a).

18. (New) The method according to Claim 3, wherein the at least one precursor of silicone resin used in step a) is a silicate.

19. (New) The method according to Claim 3, wherein the at least one precursor of silicone resin used in step a) is a sodium silicate.

20. (New) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the functional units other than hydrophobic units are selected from the group consisting of the following functions: bactericidal, bacteriostatic, chromophoric, fluorescence, antifouling, and combinations thereof.

21. (New) The method according to Claim 5, wherein the dynamic viscosity at 25°C of the suspension during mixing is less than or equal to 150 Pa.s.

22. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator is chosen from organic solvents selected from the group consisting of alcohols, ketones, amides, alkanes and mixtures thereof.

23. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the acidification of the aqueous suspension (aqueous phase) is carried out using an inorganic acid.

24. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the acidification of the aqueous suspension (aqueous phase) is carried out using an acid selected from the group consisting of HCl, H₂SO₄, H₃PO₄ and mixtures thereof.

25. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the silicone material *SM* comprises at least one diorganosiloxane.

26. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the silicone material *SM* comprises hexamethyldisiloxane.

27. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the precursor of hydrophobic units is an alkylchlorosilane.

28. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the precursor of hydrophobic units is a methylchlorosilane.

29. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the method has at least one of the following characteristics:

a). the at least one hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator comprises isopropyl alcohol;

b). the aqueous silica suspension comprises HCl;

c). the halosilanes that is a precursor of the hydrophobic units comprises (CH₃)₃SiCl-;

d). the at least one oligoorganosiloxane comprises hexamethyldisiloxane;

e). heating the medium is heated to a temperature in the region of the reflux temperature of the hydrogen bond stabilizer/initiator to form a hydrophobic silica ;

f). the aqueous phase is separated from the nonaqueous phase by decantation; and

g). the silicone material *SM* comprises at least one polyorganosiloxane (POS).

30. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the proportion of the ingredients has at least one of the following characteristics:

acid: from 30 to 50;

precursor of $-\text{Si}-(\text{R}^c)_{1 \text{ to } 3}$: from 10 to 200;

H bond stabilizer/initiator: from 1 to 10; and

water: 200 to 1,000.

31. (New) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the various ingredients are used in the following proportions (parts by dry weight for all that is not water):

silica: 100;

acid: 30 to 50;

precursor of $-\text{Si}-(\text{R}^c)_{1 \text{ to } 3}$: 10 to 200;

H bond stabilizer/initiator: 1 to 10;

SM oil: 40 to 2,000; and

water: 200 to 1,000.